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Letter dated 24 June 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Turkey to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I would like to bring to your attention a significant incident that poses a serious threat to peace and security in the region, in the context of the Syrian crisis.

On 22 June 2012, at 11.58 local time, a Turkish RF-4-type military aircraft was shot down by Syrian forces while flying solo and without arms 13 nautical miles off the coast of the Syrian Arab Republic in international airspace at an altitude of 7,400 feet.

The precise coordinates of the incident are 35 48.22N - 35 32.21E. The aircraft did not display any hostile attitude or manoeuvre and was flying with its identification systems open. The shooting came without any prior warning. After receiving a deadly blow, the aircraft diverted towards the Syrian coast and crashed into the sea at 8 nautical miles off the coast of Latakia, precisely at the coordinates 35 48.26N - 35 37.59E.

In fact, both Turkish and Syrian radar and radio records testify that our aircraft was shot at in international airspace. Third parties' radar records would substantiate these facts as well. Furthermore, the captured radio communication among Syrian authorities clearly demonstrates that the Syrian units were fully aware of the circumstances and the fact that the aircraft belonged to Turkey.

A search and rescue operation was immediately initiated and still continues. Yet, on 22 June 2012, harassment fire was opened to our CASA-type aircraft by an anti-aircraft artillery positioned on the Syrian shore in spite of the established coordination with the Syrian authorities for the search and rescue operation.

Turkey's primary focus at this moment is the search and rescue mission. Once all the facts are established, we will decide on the scope of the measures in response to this act. Turkey withholds its rights emanating from international law.

This attack in international airspace, causing possible loss of two Turkish pilots, is a hostile act by the Syrian authorities against Turkey's national security. Thus, we strongly condemn it.

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I would be grateful if the text of the present letter would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 34, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ertuğrul **Apakan**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative